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THE FIRST DAY

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Principal J. Sterling Morton High School
Cicero, Illinois

The conductor of a chorus strives for good attack. It is very important for the success of his chorus and for his reputation as a director. Those who hear music, although they have no reaction whatever when they see *attacca con brio*, appreciate the result obtained when a large chorus as with one voice strikes the first note with feeling and precision. I know of a high-school principal who is more or less of a musician, who strives to have the attack of his faculty and of his student body on the first day of the fall term such that the arrayed group swings into the rhythm of the high-school work with zeal and with confidence. My interest in this achievement led me to inquire how this fine attack was obtained. I soon found that there was, as with a chorus, long and careful preparation.

The school opened each fall the first week in September, but in the preceding April plans for the opening day were brewing. In the first place, every teacher in the high school had some administrative duties. The plan of having every

teacher an adviser contributed to the success of the opening day. The women of the faculty counseled the girls, and men advised the boys. There was therefore one adviser to every twenty pupils. At the beginning of each school year, after the pupils new to the school were adjusted to their school surroundings, they met their advisers in private conference, talked over their plans for high school and for the years beyond, and laid out on a somewhat elaborate blank a four-year high-school course. On this form in the allotted place the reasons for the course agreed upon were given.

Name: EDITH LARNED.....Tel. 814-J

Date of birth: April 8, 1902. Adviser: Miss HESSLER

Parent's name: JOSEPH LARNED

Parent's address: 1434 Cedar Street

Spelling

1. Biology
2. Biology
3. Physical Training
4. Mathematics I
5. English IIb
6. Lunch
7. Modern History
8. Sewing
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.

A second item that made the first day a going day was the early preparation of the program of recitations. In April a schedule of courses to be offered in the fall semester was drawn. This was placed in the hands of each member of the faculty, and their work as advisers took on a new aspect. They now drew from the files the four-year plan which they had laid out with each pupil whom they advised, and in

conference with the pupil adjusted the next semester's work of the planned course to the program of the coming fall. Each pupil in April or early in May made out his registration card for the next semester. A typical card of a second year pupil is given on the preceding page.

Thus in May all pupils in school, except those in the graduating class were scheduled for the next semester's work. When all the cards that had English II*b*, first-semester second-year English, on them were in, the English teachers arranged these cards in a number of piles, about thirty or thirty-five cards to a pile. This is more than the allotted number for classes, but it is always necessary to allow for shrinkage. All cards of pupils of the English II*b* group who could do superior work were stacked together, all cards of those who did inferior work were placed in another pile, and thus there were left a number of piles of cards of thirty or more to a pile of pupils who did mediocre work. These groups of English II*b* were assigned to the seven or eight English teachers for

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Spelling—316

1. Biology—311

2. Biology—311

3. Physical Training—Girls' Gym.

4. Mathematics I—216

5. English II*b*—213

6. Lunch

7. Modern History—122

8. Sewing—308

9.

10.

11.

the fifth period of the day. In the same way the two or three sections of Mathematics I were assigned. When this had been done for each of the subjects, the room numbers could be added to the cards, and the card completed (p. 723).

When this had been done for the Senior, Junior, and Sophomore classes of the following September, copies of these registration cards were made out on a form called "Guide Card." (See Guide Card, p. 728).

While this was being done for the pupils in the high school, a similar procedure was carried on in the grammar schools which were contributory to the high school. The principal went to each one of the eighth grades in the high-school district. He talked to the classes, telling them of the high school, of the value of further training, and answered questions about the high school and the groups of studies. He left literature about the high school and registration cards for the eighth-grade pupils. They were asked to talk over with the home folk the different curricula offered and then come back to school and with the help of the eighth-grade teacher make out the list of studies for the first semester in high school. An effort was made to have each pupil in the eighth grades sign a registration card. The signing of the card was considered as a long step taken in selling the goods. The eighth-grade pupil who signed was looked upon as a prospective customer. The names of eighth-grade pupils who were not planning to attend high school were particularly sought, and to the father of such a letter similar to the one below was sent:

May, 23, 1918

MY DEAR MR. CORNWALL:

I saw John in the Roosevelt School last Monday. I hope you are planning to send him to high school in September, for in the last month we have found positions for over fifty of the graduates of our two-year and four-year courses, and not one of these will receive less than twelve dollars a week. You see it will pay you to send him to high school.

Very sincerely yours,

MR. JAMES CORNWALL
St. Paul, Minnesota

A follow-up letter a few weeks later, with literature advertising the high school inclosed, was also sent. An accurate report on the business this advertising brought cannot, of course, be had. The principal, however, believed that it was a large factor in bringing the increased attendance of which the school boasts.

When all the registration cards from the eighth grades were in, the clerk had his little task. The arrangement of the English classes was taken up first. Of the 300-odd Freshmen cards, 70 were graded "superior" by the eighth-grade teachers, 60 are in the poor group, and the rest are of medium ability. With a sheet of paper 50 inches by 14 inches blocked out as below, the distribution of the Freshmen cards for the English can be quickly accomplished by distributing the cards graded "medium" to the spaces labeled "medium," giving 35 cards to each of the spaces except the "low" sections, which will have 30 apiece.

	1"	6"	6"	50"	6"	
		Room 109 Mr. A Medium	Room 212 Miss B Medium	Room 213 Miss C Medium	Room 204 Miss D Medium	
1st		35	35	35	35	
				Low	Medium	
2d		(No class the second period)	(No class the second period)	30	35	

When the cards are all distributed with the proper number to each stack, the clerk takes up the pile on Mr. A's block and puts the room number 109 on each card opposite English.

Then a triplicate list of the pupils that are to go to Mr. A in Room 109 the first period is typed. This same process is followed for each of the other stacks on the 50x14 sheets. And English I is done. The other studies are handled in a similar manner, and the clerk at his leisure during the summer can prepare the special guide cards for these incoming Freshmen.

The pupils continuing in school until the closing day in June report, when the assembling-bell rings every morning, in their several rooms, where the attendance is taken and where for ten minutes a study of words is pursued. Some written work also is done. Below is a model of the latter type of work.

SPELLING

I

1. avalanche, n.
2. ăv' à lănch.
3. L. *ad*—to—*vallis*—valley.
4. a) An avalanche is a large mass of ice and snow, or of earth and rocks, sliding swiftly down a mountain side.
b) An avalanche is a sudden great or irresistible descent.
5. a) A village in Northern Italy was completely buried by an avalanche from the Alps.
b) An avalanche of hostile troops descended upon our soldiers.

II

Two words are studied each day. In the written work, as well as in the oral work, the word is first spelled solid, then syllabicated with diacritical markings. The derivation and history of the word follow. If the word has two or more meanings, these are given and differentiated. And finally, as the crux of the recitation, the pupil is asked to invent sentences that not only contain the word but also give by their content some clew to the meaning of the word. This

exercise of framing sentences gives opportunity for correcting wrong notions of the shades of meaning of the word which the pupils may have, and, therefore, is the most important part of the lesson. At the close of each month the pupils are graded in the work, and the grade appears along with the teachers' estimates of the other branches. Every teacher in the school, except those that report late in the morning and are on duty late in the afternoon, has such a class in the study of words, called "Spelling." The main object of the work is to increase the vocabulary of the pupil and at the same time have him learn to spell the new words at his command.

At the close of the year the pupils then on the spelling-class rolls are classified according to their attainment in this particular work; the best in the array are at the top of the list, the next are next below, and so on down the list, with the incoming eighth-grade pupils at the foot of the list, but arranged in high to low scholarship order on the basis of a test given them in May on a list of words from the Ayres Spelling Scale. The entire number of pupils in this list is divided by the number of teachers in the faculty, and there will be a quotient of some thirty or more pupils to meet each teacher on the first day of the fall semester. The teachers are then assigned to these classes, and each pupil then has a "home room" or attendance room assignment. Of course, these lists that go to each teacher for attendance purposes and this study of words are swollen lists. The attendance the first day at these classes makes correction necessary at once, for some drop out and disappear between June and September. If there were 100 per cent. retention, no corrections would be necessary.

Now with each teacher assigned to his room and each pupil who is in high school or in the eighth grade assigned to a teacher for his first appointment on the opening day, it is necessary for the clerk to prepare a typed list in alphabetical

order of all the pupils who in June are in either high school or in the eighth grade and to set next to each pupil's name the number of room to which he should go on his entering the high-school building on the first day. Several duplicates of

Obverse Side

GUIDE CARD

Name: ELSIE JARRARD

8:30 Spelling—216

1. 8:45 English I—218
2. 9:30 Physical Training—Girls' Gym.
3. 10:15 General Science—307
4. 11:00 Civics—109
5. 11:45 Lunch
6. 12:30 Latin—121
7. 2:00
8. 2:45
9. 3:30
10. 4:15
11. 5:00

Reverse Side

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS

1. Rooms numbered 100 to 200 are on first floor; 200 to 300 are on second floor; 300 to 400 on third floor.
2. When the bell rings at 8:25, go at once to your Spelling or Attendance Room.
3. When you should come too late (after 8:40 A.M.) for spelling, take the written note from home explaining your lateness and signed by parent or guardian at once to the office and there exchange it for an admittance slip.
4. When in the halls you should be walking briskly. Do not loiter.
5. Spend your free periods in the Study Room.
6. When you are through with your appointments, you are free to go home.
7. When you leave the grounds, you are on your way home.

this list are typed in order that they may be posted in the halls for the direction of the pupils on the opening day.

During the summer vacation the clerk also prepared guide cards for the eighth-grade pupils (p. 728). These are copies of their registration cards plus some information those new to the school need.

These cards are, when completed, grouped together with the guide cards of the upper-class pupils so that each teacher will thus have cards corresponding to the roll of his class for spelling. With these guide cards done and the lists of each of the other classes for the teacher typed, and the typed alphabetical lists of all the pupils, together with their spelling-room assignment prepared, the clerk is ready for the opening day of school.

During the three weeks previous to the opening of the high school in the fall a notice is printed in the local papers to the effect that the high-school principal and some of his assistants will be in the high-school building during the three days previous to the opening day to meet pupils who had not registered in June or who desire for good reasons to change their June registration. The new entrants make additions pro rata to the bundle of guide cards each teacher will have, and make necessary also a supplementary or "late list" to the alphabetical lists of pupils with their spelling or attendance-room assignments. Changes in registration affect only the guide cards and class lists already made out. These changes do not affect the assignment to the spelling classes.

At the teachers' meeting the day before the school opens the teachers are given the following direction sheet.

Teachers were informed that the first day was like all other days and that thorough and careful teaching should be done on that day as on all other days.

On the morning of the first day, when the pupils entered the building, they found notices posted in all the halls directing

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FIRST DAY

1. Obtain the Guide Cards for the pupils of your Spelling class from the clerk.
2. Be in your room at 8:00 A.M.
3. Be ready to act as adviser and to register any pupil sent to you either previous to 8:30, the Spelling period, or during any of your free periods. Pupils coming to the school for the first time and not previously registered will be assigned pro rata to the teachers for registration. As soon as a new pupil is registered conduct him to the clerk for his room assignments. Leave his registration card in the office.
4. At 8:30, the Spelling period.
 - (1) Obtain name and address of each pupil in your room. Bring these to the office as soon as possible.
 - (2) Correct your Spelling list.
 - (3) Give out Guide Cards.
 - (4) Fill out Attendance blank (sample given below) and place in clip at the door. The clip is on the door casing in the hall.
 - (5) Call pupils' attention to information on reverse side of guide cards. Give any explanations that seem necessary.
5. Obtain name and address of pupils in each of your classes. File a copy of these rolls in the office before the close of the day. Be sure you give your name to your classes, so the pupils will know who their teacher is in each subject. All class periods will be held the full time.
6. Teachers' meeting at 3:30 P.M. Bring the class rolls the clerk made out for you and the new rolls of today to the meeting.

them to find their names on the alphabetical lists in the halls and at the 8:25 bell to go to the rooms the numbers of which were placed opposite their names. The pupils thus go to their spelling rooms, receive their guide cards, and at the close of the spelling period pass at once to their next recitation. If they cannot find their names in the alphabetical lists posted in the halls, they are evidently pupils who were not in the eighth grade in May last, and are directed to go to the office. There their names and addresses are taken, they are assigned to some teacher as an adviser, and then they are sent to their adviser's room to be registered for their classes.